



State of Vermont
Vermont Department of Education
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

MEMORANDUM

To: Principals, Superintendents, Technical Center Directors
From: Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner
Re: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Update
Date: April 22, 2009

As part of the Vermont portion of the national American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding, Education Stabilization Funds are likely to be used to maintain anticipated funding levels to Vermont schools over the next two years. In addition, most Supervisory Unions will also receive a significant increase in funding through Title I and IDEA streams. It is my expectation that these funds will be used as a catalyst for transformational efforts in Vermont schools.

In accepting these funds on behalf of Vermont schools, the department has an obligation to advance the following assurances:

1. Implement college- and career-ready standards and high quality, valid, and reliable assessments for all students;
2. Improve teacher effectiveness;
3. Develop Pre-K to 16 longitudinal data systems that advance the principles in the America COMPETES Act; and
4. Intensify support, providing effective interventions for lowest-performing schools.

During this critical time it is important that we use these funds to drive lasting results without creating unsustainable recurring costs.

While we must continue to adhere to federal guidelines around the use of these funds, the additional influx of funding means there are substantial opportunities available for moving transformational efforts forward in our schools. Some examples follow:

- Providing intensive technical assistance (training, coaching and modeling) to educators (teachers, administrators, and support staff) in implementing innovative, evidence-based, strategies in reading, math, and science and in the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports.
- Establishing a system to identify and train highly effective teachers to serve as instructional leaders and mentors.
- Modify school structures and schedules to facilitate teacher collaboration and expand the “school day” for student learning.

- Implementing innovative, flexible, evidence-based programs and practices to provide early identification and support to students who are at risk of not completing high school.
- Implementing continuous, real-time student progress monitoring systems to assist teachers and administrators in collecting and using data to improve instruction and learning for all students.
- Provide intensive training and coaching to teachers, administrators, and para-educators to improve services provided to students with disabilities, including autism and emotional behavioral disorders.
- To support the training and certification of early childhood educators working in a program offered by or through a school district.

The department currently supports and is working to create ways to increase school access (in light of ARRA funding) to a range of models which facilitate much of the work described above:

- Responsiveness to Intervention
- Comprehensive Local Assessment Systems
- Positive Behavioral Supports
- Formative Assessment
- Differentiated Instruction
- Secondary Transformation
- Foundations of Early Learning
- 21st Century After School Programs
- Autism Training
- Focused Monitoring
- School Improvement Support
- Vermont's Integrated Instruction Model

Both the Vermont and the U.S. Departments of Education must see evidence of these transformational efforts if our state is to continue to receive these funds. We look forward to working with you to take full advantage of these funds to provide the best possible education for Vermont's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Armando Vilaseca". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A".

Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner
Vermont Department of Education

For the latest information, visit http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/recovery_act.html.